United Nations E/CN.6/2005/NGO/6

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
27 January 2005

Original: English

Commission on the Status of Women
Forty-ninth session
28 February-11 March 2005
Item 3 (c) of the provisional agenda*
Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century": implementation of strategic objectives and action in the critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives

Statement submitted by Altrusa International, Armenian Assembly of America, Armenian International Women's Association, Associated Country Women of the World, Baha'i International Community, Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, International Alliance of Women, International Federation of Business and Professional Women, International Federation of Settlements and Neighbourhood Centres, International Federation of University Women, International Federation of Women in Legal Careers, International Federation of Women Lawyers, Pan Pacific and South-East Asia Women's Association, Soroptimist International, Trickle Up Program, United Nations Association of the USA, United States Committee for UNIFEM, Virginia Gildersleeve International Fund, World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, World Young Women's Christian Association and Zonta International, non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

* E/CN.6/2005/1.

05-22233 (E) 080205

Statement

We, the international and national non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council and members of the NGO Committee on UNIFEM, are in strong support of the leadership provided by the United Nations Development Fund for Women toward fulfilling the commitments made to the *Platform for Action* adopted at the Beijing Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995.

Since its creation by the UN General Assembly in 1976, the realization of women's human rights is at the centre of all of UNIFEM's work. The Beijing *Platform for Action*, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security have become the framing documents for UNIFEM's efforts.

In fulfilling its mandate to serve as a catalyst to ensure the involvement of women in mainstream development activities, especially at the pre-investment stage, UNIFEM provides financial and technical assistance to innovative programmes and strategies that foster women's empowerment and gender equality.

Through its activities at national, regional and local levels UNIFEM has developed four areas of particular expertise as their focus in the next four years: reducing feminized poverty, ending violence against women of all ages, reversing the spread of HIV/AIDS among women and girls, and achieving gender equality in democratic governance in times of peace as well as war.

In the area of reducing feminized poverty, UNIFEM's work in 2003 concentrated on women migrant workers and balancing budgets for gender equality.

- To assist women in making their labour abroad the foundation for a better future at home, UNIFEM has worked to enhance migration policies and legislation, strengthen women migrant workers' organizations and facilitate dialogue between countries of origin and destination to advance workers' human rights.

- In 20 countries UNIFEM has supported the development of gender-responsive budgets that look at how the allocation of public resources benefits women and men and addresses gender equality requirements.

In its focus on ending violence against women, it should be noted that in 1996 the UN General Assembly established a Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women administered by UNIFEM. Since its inception the Trust Fund has awarded US$8.3 million to 175 initiatives in 96 countries. Grant applications from grass-roots organizations seeking Trust Fund support exceed by many times the financial assets of the Trust Fund. We urge Member States, nongovernmental organizations and private donors to support generously this exceptional Fund.

- In addition, in 2003 anti-violence legislation was a focus of UNIFEM's program work. The Train of Hope, a three-year campaign conducted in nine CIS countries reached several million people, raising public awareness of violence against women and building extensive networks between crisis centres, politicians, media and research institutions.

- In Eastern and Southern Africa UNIFEM projects engaged men to talk to other men in advocating for an end to violence against women.

In approaching the issue of halting the spread of HIV/AIDS, UNIFEM's work in 2003 included:

- Highlighting the links between violence and HIV/AIDS.

- Promoting the development of gender-responsive HIV/AIDS policies for health care which address discriminatory practices for pregnant women and equal access to anti-retroviral drugs.

- Supporting women living with HIV/AIDS to advocate for a future in which they can live without stigma and violence and continue to lead healthy, meaningful lives.

As a continuing focus of its attention, UNIFEM has long worked to ensure that women have the ability and opportunity to participate in decision-making at all levels.

- In post-conflict situations when new constitutions and legislative structures are being created, UNIFEM offered training for women's organizations to participate in the national debate.

- UNIFEM provided significant support to the constitutional processes in Afghanistan that led to the provision of equality between men and women in the nation's new Constitution in 2003.

- UNIFEM has worked around the world to stimulate implementation of the Convention on All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), focusing on women's participation as a priority.

UNIFEM's effective partnerships within the UN system and its collaboration with women's organizations have made it an important and effective agency for the advancement of women and girls. We members of the NGO Committee on UNIFEM ask for your continued and increased support of its important, unfinished work.